

U.S. Department of Education
2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School - 13IA5

	Charter	Title 1	Magnet	Choice
School Type (Public Schools):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Principal: Mr. George Bruder

Official School Name: Taft Elementary School

School Mailing Address: 612 2nd Avenue North
Humboldt, IA 50548-8867

County: Humboldt State School Code Number*: 48900409

Telephone: (515) 332-3216 E-mail: gbruder@humboldt.k12.ia.us

Fax: (515) 332-7102 Web site/URL: www.humboldt.k12.ia.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Mr. Greg Darling Superintendent e-mail: gdarling@humboldt.k12.ia.us

District Name: Humboldt Community School District District Phone: (515) 332-3216

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mrs. Trina Carda

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools (Aba.Kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or its equivalent each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's AYP requirement or its equivalent in the 2012-2013 school year. Meeting AYP or its equivalent must be certified by the state. Any AYP status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2007 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for that period.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
1 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
4 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 6001

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Small city or town in a rural area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 18
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	43	41	84
2	55	53	108
3	43	44	87
4	35	37	72
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:			351

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
2 % Black or African American
6 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
88 % White
2 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2011-2012 school year: 10%
This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Step	Description	Value
(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	17
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	19
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	36
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	351
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.10
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	10

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 1%
Total number of ELL students in the school: 9
Number of non-English languages represented: 1
Specify non-English languages:

Spanish

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 39%

Total number of students who qualify: 137

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 8%

Total number of students served: 47

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>2</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>37</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>5</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>2</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>17</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>46</u>	<u>2</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

16:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Daily student attendance	96%	94%	93%	93%	93%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2012.

Graduating class size: _____

Enrolled in a 4-year college or university _____%

Enrolled in a community college _____%

Enrolled in vocational training _____%

Found employment _____%

Military service _____%

Other _____%

Total _____**0%**

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☒ No

☐ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

PART III - SUMMARY

Taft Elementary School is located in Humboldt, Iowa in the north central part of the state. Our school houses grades first, second, third and fourth in four classrooms per grade level with an average class size of twenty students placed in four sections. Mease Elementary, located in Dakota City is our Early Childhood Center where our preschool and our kindergartners attend. Our district includes students from Humboldt with a population of 4,500 people and Dakota City which is located less than a mile from Humboldt with 950 people, as well as students from the towns of Rutland, Renwick and Hardy. With this many communities it is a challenge to continue to provide consistency for all families and patrons. Communicating with all stakeholders is important and we do this through daily email announcements, local radio news and local newspaper.

"Learning and Success for All" is Taft Elementary School's mission statement. It is the belief that all teachers and support staff truly model every school day. They take great pride toward meeting this and diligently stand by it. Nothing is more important to our school personnel than its students, their well-being and their growth as learners. Their achievement in the classroom, their relationships with highly qualified staff, and their connectedness to the learning environment all lead to our status as a high performing school.

Believing every student can learn and be successful is accomplished through the district's beliefs:

- When the environment is safe, stimulating, and caring
- When there is mutual respect
- When individual social, emotional, intellectual, physical, cultural, and behavioral needs are met
- When they have a choice in what they learn
- When expectations are clearly defined
- When the curriculum is relevant, rigorous, and engaging
- When instruction and assessment are varied to meet student needs
- When challenged with learning situations that require critical and creative thinking
- When feedback is thorough and consistent
- When all stakeholders are involved and supportive

The students firmly believe that they can learn and be successful at Taft Elementary School. Daily they count on a safe, stimulating, and caring staff and a classroom atmosphere where their individual, social, emotional, and intellectual needs will be met. The overall attendance is excellent and students have pride in their school and thrive through the friendships they have created.

We have implemented Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and the staff teach and re-teach all behavioral expectations with fidelity. The students model excellent behavior and enjoy being acknowledged and participating in celebrations. The teachers have provided incentives for the students to earn CAT Cards for displaying good character and positive behavior. The celebrations are definitely memorable and are great incentive to meet the expectations to ensure their participation in the next celebration.

The teachers and support staff strive to create student-centered classrooms holding students accountable for their actions and learning. Their commitment to students has been recognized at the state and national level through their work as an Authentic Intellectual Work (AIW) district. The teachers strive to ensure their students' accomplishments in all subject areas, and the results show growth and improvement that are consistently above the state trajectories. The excellent trends in student achievement are an accomplishment that generates great pride at Taft Elementary. Academics are very important to the students, teachers, and parents. Parents have a 99% attendance rate at our bi-annual Parent-Teacher Conferences.

We recently established a parent-teacher support entity called PATHS, Parents and Teachers for Humboldt Students. The team is committed to providing supports for teachers and students to put them on the path for good citizenship, graduating with skills to be successful adults. The teachers thoroughly commend the parents for their genuine and caring efforts.

The community of Humboldt overwhelmingly displays their support of the school and its students. The following is list of a few of the programs and specialties that the community provides to our students:

- Firefighters, police, and the power company engage students in safety lessons
- County conservationists provide outdoor classrooms
- Service organizations provide educational activities and resources
- Humboldt Elementary Business Partners
- Veterans of Foreign Wars provides writing and art contests and students participate in ceremonies recognizing and honoring our veterans and military personnel

Taft Elementary School is extremely proud to have been selected as one of five National Blue Ribbon nominees from the state of Iowa. Our commitment to “Learning and Success For All” becomes a reality in receiving this recognition from the Iowa Department of Education and this nomination is a reward in itself.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

We are proud of the fact the students at Taft Elementary School have maintained high student achievement results on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and Iowa Assessments over the last five school years in both reading and mathematics for grades 3 and 4. Through the years, the state department has set trajectories or aim lines that our school is to obtain. During the last five school years, Taft Elementary School has performed above or equal to the aim line set for us. During the last five years the third graders have achieved proficient and/or advanced with a percentage of 89 in reading. This is 8 percentage points higher than the state average. During the last five years the third graders have achieved proficient and/or advanced with a percentage of 88 in mathematics. This is 17 percentage points higher than the state average. During the last five years the fourth graders have achieved proficient and/or advanced with a percentage of 87 in reading. This is 7 percentage points higher than the state average. During the last five years the fourth graders have achieved proficient and/or advanced with a percentage of 90 in mathematics. This is 19 percentage points higher than the state average.

The Iowa State Educational Department has created three levels of performance. They are advanced/high, proficient/intermediate, and below proficient/low. Our district's expectation is that all students achieve at the proficiency level or higher. The ultimate goal is to move any student from the current level they are measured at and attain a higher level of achievement.

Over the last five school years, the student enrollment at Taft Elementary has slightly increased, with the ELL population and low-socio economic population increasing at a much faster rate. After the analysis of the data tables contained in this application, the overall conclusion is considering the changes in demographics, our school has maintained proficiency levels at 88% or higher. Grade levels range from 80-90 students each school year with proficiency rates in the high eighties. We have a small percentage of students not reaching proficiency.

We are proud of the student achievement results and continue to achieve even higher scores. The teachers, parents, and students strive to continue to grow together as a learning community. Reading and math have continued to be given the highest attention in professional development, teacher meetings, grade level meetings, and in curriculum work and data conversations. Each year the district and Taft Elementary set goals to achieve increased student achievement. Authentic Intellectual Work is the guiding force in all professional development and the teacher improvement work all starts there. Teachers analyze student work results, tasks, and instruction at the AIW sessions.

The focus for reading is increasing comprehension, fluency, and accuracy. Each student at Taft Elementary receives approximately 120 minutes of reading instruction per school day. The focus for mathematics is to create problem solvers and thinkers that will prepare the students for the 21st Century. We understand how important it is for our students to be able to read all reading genres and understand its text, and at the same time, the importance of solving problems as it relates to the technical world of today and the future. These factors have assisted greatly in the high student achievement performance at Taft Elementary.

After the analysis of the data, we were able to identify a gradual decline of proficiency for the low-socio economic subgroup for both reading comprehension and math problem solving. Through the RTI process and a continuum of supports we are closely monitoring and intervening to ensure progress toward proficiency for all students.

2. Using Assessment Results:

The Humboldt School District is shifting from data analyzed by a single person to everyone taking responsibility to answer the essential questions. Looking at where we have been, where we are right now and where we are going we use data to look for trends and to guide us in the right direction.

We utilize 2 approaches to understanding data, looking at data for patterns and starting with questions and utilizing data to get answers. This fall our District Leadership Team presented the Elementary Leadership Team with these questions. What is the correlation between attendance and proficiency/non proficiency? How much time is being spent on direct reading instruction at the (K-8) grade levels? After Title 1 services become unavailable, do these students continue to grow? These types of questions help us analyze students' needs, our programs and services, and guide us in making improvements.

In our Authentic Intellectual Work-AIW PD teams utilize a set of criteria to score tasks, student work, and instruction. The AIW coaches use this data to determine team needs. The AIW coaches provide the DLT with Classroom Implementation Profile data to determine the fidelity of implementation.

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills is an assessment we administer 3 times a year as a universal screening of our K-4th graders. The data is utilized to establish placement in small groups, to inform whole group instruction, and for Response to Intervention. 1:1 and small group interventions are established and we use phase lines to monitor progress.

Taft Elementary uses the School-Wide Information System to track behavioral data. This program gives the PBIS team the capability to evaluate student behavior, behavior of groups, behaviors occurring in specific settings, and during specific times of the school day.

In grades 3-11 Measures of Academic Progress are administered twice a year and IA Assessments annually. These assessments provide detailed information about reading, math, language arts, and science. This data is analyzed in January and provides information about student's academic levels and provides school-wide reports. Our teachers also gain access to DesCartes which dissects needs of individuals and prescribes the next steps for intervention.

All grade levels at Taft use Success Maker which personalizes a path for mastery of reading and math concepts. Teachers use the online reports to make decisions about each learner's skills that need strengthened.

We have a strong RTI data team that utilizes all the above sources of data to support our students. Much of this data is stored in a system called Heart and we are awaiting the arrival of a new storage warehouse, Infinite Campus.

When sharing with our stakeholders we think about the audience and we work to tell the story through the data. We utilize our Annual Progress Report to inform the community and 3 times a year we report summative student progress to parents and utilize formative data to keep them informed in between. We utilize a Key Survey Community Needs Assessment to collect and share perceptual data and our student learning data to enable the School Board and our School Improvement Advisory Council to set data driven goals.

Teachers use formative and summative results to identify gaps in learning and determine progress toward annual growth. We are gaining a better understanding of the purpose of different measures, the types of scores and ways that data can be organized and displayed. Using multiple sources of data including demographic, perception, learning and school process data, is always on the minds of all stakeholders, along with a focus on 'Learning and Success for ALL'.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

At Taft Elementary School we consider it an honor that teachers travel to Humboldt to learn about the innovative ways we are meeting student needs. Our Elementary Leadership Team also shares its work with our Superintendent, the School Board of Education, and other groups such as the Facilities Team or District School Improvement Committee. It is with great pride to share the positive happenings locally through our local newspaper and radio station through weekly reports regarding the success of our district.

Annually teachers from other districts who are engaged in Cognitively Guided Instruction have visited Taft Elementary to observe the CGI instruction of our two certified CGI trainers. These instructors spend the summers teaching other teachers this problem solving approach in math and have also presented at state and national conferences.

Educators from surrounding communities have come to observe our guided reading instruction, and through electronic networking our teachers share their successes of their Daily 5 literacy instruction with others.

Authentic Intellectual Work is our district's PD. Our AIW Lead Coaches frequently meet with AIW coaches and administrators from other districts to share implementation strategies. We have hosted AIW coaches who observe instruction in our classrooms to further develop their own coaching skills.

Our Preschools received an excellent compliance review for the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program grant and have presented at workshops and hosted teachers as they prepare for their own reviews.

Approximately ten years ago our two elementary schools became grade-alike attendance centers. We have been able to share our story with other districts that are realigning their attendance centers to become grade-alike.

Several times a year, our elementary principal and curriculum director attend meetings with our conference elementary principals. In these meetings we learn from each other and share programming and other information to help us all move our students and staff forward.

We recognize the fact that all stakeholders diligently and successfully, and most importantly, receive many of the accolades that come with a high performing school. We acknowledge our School Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools, teachers, students, parents, and community for their collaboration that has allowed Taft Elementary to achieve such a high level of success.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Taft Elementary strives to improve the quality of engagement of families and community. Daily parent announcements and e-mails keep families informed of school and community events. Every week the community is informed of school happenings through the radio station's Wildcat News. Our local newspaper attends events and shares positive happenings.

We have programs that provide families with supports to ensure student success. We house the After School Program providing a safe, fun environment for our latch-key children. We also provide an after school work room for students who need supports in completing homework, tutoring, or a quiet place to study or read.

We make connections with health care professionals and utilize supports from the Area Education Agency. Our Principal, Family School Coordinator, Elementary Interventionist and Counselor provide families with links to community resources. We have volunteers that assist teachers in monitoring

student progress and provide extra time for students to build skills. Law enforcement officers have lunch with our students, and one retired officer has volunteered his services at the busiest cross walk in the district.

We welcome new families to Taft Elementary with personal tours and assistance in registering their children. New students meet with the counselor to learn about the expectations of being a Taft student. Staff make personal phone calls throughout the year to keep parents informed of their child's progress.

Parents are encouraged to visit classrooms, eat lunch with their child and invited to attend special events in their classrooms. The night before school we have an Open House to meet the new teacher and gain some insight into expectations for the year. Parents attend two scheduled conferences with their child's teacher and other support personnel. Parents are encouraged to contact the school with any concerns or questions they may have regarding their child's education or well-being.

In order to promote the arts, every student is given an opportunity to share their talents and perform one afternoon and one evening each year. The fourth graders prepare and perform an operetta for the community.

Parents and Teachers for Humboldt Students-PATHS is an elementary partnership that has a mission of "Giving Back To the Classrooms." They provide communication between parents and school, identify and cultivate support, and assist in staff appreciation and promoting school pride. Twice a year they plan and organize an evening for parents to learn about educational opportunities and also host a Family Fun Night.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Humboldt's K-12 Curriculum Teams focus on the implementation of the Iowa Core through our 6-year curriculum cycle. Once a month the team meetings, led by teacher leaders ensure that resources and assessments are aligned with the Iowa Core. We utilize many resources to meet the expectations of Iowa Core Implementation.

In English Language Arts the principal and all teachers participated in the Iowa Department of Education's Initial ELA Investigations. The Reading/LA core curriculum addresses the Iowa Core Standards through small group instruction in Guided Reading groups and also in whole group instruction. We use procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills, which provide us data on Iowa Core implementation. To address the writing strand all teachers were provided training in the 6+Traits of Writing. The language and foundational skills are addressed through the implementation of the Write Source program which also provides students with access to a digital platform to practice the skills of the Language Standards. Many other resources are also utilized.

At Taft Elementary we spend 90 minutes a day implementing Everyday Math and Cognitively Guided Instruction. CGI guides teachers to focus on what students know and helps them build future understanding based on present knowledge. Everyday Math is directly aligned with the Common Core which is included in the Iowa Core. The programs have improved our children's mathematical skills with an emphasis on what children can do, rather than on what they cannot do which ultimately has changed teaching practices and had a huge effect on our district math scores.

Humboldt K-12 science teachers have adopted a vision for the Inquiry approach at Humboldt including questioning, making claims, self-assessment, knowledge mastery and the assimilation of new learning. Our teachers carry out this vision with the use of inquiry kits that address the Iowa Core Science Standards of Physical, Life, Earth and Space, as well as the 21st Century Health Literacy Standards. Our Pearson Interactive Science has a digital online course where students are set up to interact online with active art simulations, directed virtual labs, animated art, and get extra help while at home or school. A multitude of resources and instructional strategies are utilized to cover the Iowa Core Social Studies Standards including the behavioral sciences, economics, political sciences, geography, and civic literacy. Many of the classrooms learn about these core content areas through current and past events focused on in publications like Time for Kids, Weekly Reader, and Story Works. We have a great collection of non-fiction guided reading books which engages the students through the interdisciplinary approach.

K-12 physical education, visual and performing arts teachers meet monthly to develop their standards and benchmarks which are based on National Standards. Each one of these areas is cognizant of the integration of the English Language Arts in their respective areas.

As the district continues to invest in technological hardware and curriculum adoption our teachers are integrating more technology. Utilizing desktops, laptops, and IPADS, and with each classroom being equipped with Smart Boards, the students have a wide-variety of technology to help us focus on Iowa's technological literacy skills and the Iowa Core.

Weekly PD focuses on the AIW framework (<http://centerforaiw.com>). Teachers, administrators, and coaches form professional learning communities that follow a protocol to analyze tasks, student work and instruction. During each discussion the Iowa Core is at the center of the conversation with an effort to improve the depth of understanding through conceptual learning. We are utilizing the DE's Standards Insight tool to align instruction, tasks and student work to the Iowa Core for Math and Language Arts.

2. Reading/English:

Seven years ago we pinpointed comprehension and fluency as areas to improve instruction and achievement. Guided Reading (GR) was selected for small-group instruction designed to provide differentiated supports for students.

Reading concepts and instructional strategies are outlined in GR lesson plans focusing on verbal skills through discussion, vocabulary, decoding, fluency, understanding text features, summarization, sequencing, and character analysis all aligned with the Iowa Core. Before, during and after reading Picture Walks, Predicting, Webbing, Book Walks, Text Features, repeated reading, choral, echo reading, as well as Readers' Theater, summarization, and written response to text are integrated. Comprehension strategies aligned with the Iowa Core are integrated in thinking about the meaning of each segment of the text, building an understanding of the text as a whole, and reflecting on its meaning and message. Running Records and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS) are fluency measures used to determine progress and movement in groupings. The upper grades use Lexiles generated from Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to select "just right" materials for individuals as well as small group instruction. Success Maker provides digitally driven reading that utilizes a variety of reading content to customize learning using real-time analysis and assist in individualizing instruction through Response to Intervention (RIT).

As a systemic approach to teach phonemic awareness, vocabulary and decoding the elementary utilizes Word Journeys to assess spelling and word knowledge and offers small group instruction. Administered three times a year the Developmental Spelling Assessment helps determine stage scores for placement in Word Journeys groups focused on phonics and spelling grounded in English orthography. Vocabulary is also emphasized in the content areas as well as in whole group reading instruction through Tier 2 instruction.

As well as providing small group instruction for all students, we also have supports for students who are not-proficient or need accelerated, monitoring growth with formative data. We have TAG, Title 1 and Special Education Services and Response to Intervention.

As our community's diversity changes, our DLT and Curriculum teams are looking for an impact on our trends in data. During curriculum time we are integrating reading and writing and examining the current state of instruction, resources, and student growth. We are meeting with our literacy leaders and accessing articles and resources to move our reading programming forward to meet the literacy needs of our current population.

3. Mathematics:

The Humboldt Community School District takes pride in our mathematics curriculum and instruction. We adopted the Iowa Core Curriculum and implement the characteristics of effective instruction and the problem solving approach. Teachers use problem based instructional tasks and distributed practice that is meaningful with value beyond school. We strive for every teacher to instruct through plentiful mathematical tasks to develop deep conceptual understanding and skill proficiency in our students.

Our district chose the problem solving approach because we are committed to creating a community of learners where all students are engaged in academically challenging mathematics. This approach instills cross curricular and mathematical content connections, and is supported by decades of research. It will provide our students with 21st century skills and the universal constructs successful citizens need. The goal is for our students to be lifelong problem solvers.

Students acquire foundational mathematical skills in student centered classrooms at Taft Elementary. Young children have aspirations to make sense of their world and are naturally curious. When children build knowledge from within, they deeply understand learning and progress to higher order thinking. Teachers understand their students' abilities to solve problems and build on students' prior knowledge.

We pose problems with rigor and relevance that allow children to encounter a variety of situations involving quantities and relationships amongst quantities. Through various problem types, modeling of student knowledge, and by collaboratively communicating, our student's depth of understanding is strengthened.

Challenging all abilities of students is built within problem solving. Our teachers understand that in order for students to retain learning we must provide an environment where learning is fun, relates to real life experiences, and is successful. At Taft Elementary the students create everlasting memories, and are not just thinkers who wait for someone to tell them how to do things. Students who are below grade level need more time to concretely model numbers to understand the order of numbers. This approach has proven effective for students performing below grade level. All students at Taft Elementary are challenged by the problem solving approach.

The teachers work collaboratively in professional development. The district's Authentic Intellectual Work is very complimentary toward assisting the teachers to provide support for each other, and our students become the benefactors of this awesome work.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Humboldt Community School District's Social Studies philosophy is that students will understand and apply to their personal and public experiences the ability to analyze social issues, participate in civic and community life, and recognize the changing social circumstances as active and informed citizens in a culturally diverse and interdependent world.

Our staff infuses the Iowa Core and 21st century skills in lessons and units to meet the needs of students. Our K-12 Social Studies Team has aligned materials and resources with the behavioral and political sciences, economics, geography and history of the Iowa Core. As a result, they realigned courses at all levels, focusing more on history and conceptual learning to develop a deeper understanding of social studies concepts.

At Taft we have numerous non-fiction and historical fiction Guided Reading books that groups focus on to improve reading while developing knowledge of the social studies. The students learn about current events through publications like Time For Kids and Weekly Reader, applying social studies concepts to their content. Trips to the post office, library, fire station, and historical places help students develop an awareness of their community. They have access to social studies related technology tools to expand their knowledge of the world.

The curriculum teams and grade level teachers have created vertical and horizontal alignment to ensure students are learning content in a relevant and rigorous manner. New curriculum materials are adopted with the intention of engagement in student-centered learning, while developing the essential disciplinary processes of thinking like a historian, higher order thinking, and alignment with our district PD initiative Authentic Intellectual Work. Learning about the past, present and future, the curriculum aligns with our school mission "learning and success" for all.

During music instruction at Taft, students study patriotic and folk music that shape our American heritage and multicultural music that allows students to eliminate borders and increase tolerance. In 2011 students performed a musical based on the life of Benjamin Franklin, and the following year they performed a musical based on Lewis and Clark's expedition. Through vocal music and dramatic acting, the students are given an opportunity to infuse music, history, and culture. The delivery of instruction and the student experiences not only increase their depth of understanding in the disciplines, but they also improve the student's communication skills and bring value to learning that extends beyond the classroom.

5. Instructional Methods:

At Humboldt Community School we approach the differentiation of instruction through active planning for and attention to student differences in classrooms, in the context of high quality curriculum. This planning occurs weekly during our PD, Authentic Intellectual Work. All K-12 staff brings tasks, student work and instruction to their professional learning community to gather input on effectiveness, based on scoring criteria. The team makes recommendations for improving the depth of understanding, the higher order thinking, conceptual knowledge, value beyond school, and substantive conversation.

Recommendations for improving the level of differentiation is based on the following questions: How will students learn and access the information? What process will the students use to internalize the information? How will students show what they know? Our SpEd Curriculum Team spent 2 years developing a common understanding of differentiation and provides guidance for focused revisions.

Technology is integrated utilizing SmartBoards, iPads, desktops, and assistive technology. Purchased and free web-based programs like Book Share, Success Maker, Everyday Math, and assistive technology are used for individual and small groups. At Taft we have a set of IPADS designated for RTI. Many of the programs that we have available to teachers, students and families provide individualization and tools for monitoring student growth. This data is utilized to make decisions in the classroom and during IEP and RTI meetings as a method to monitor the effectiveness of the interventions and individualization that occurs in and out of the classrooms.

When adopting materials we seek high quality curriculum in which differentiation components are directly embedded. We purchase materials that support the differentiation, like leveled readers in science. At Taft we have a Guided Reading Bookroom with leveled books, utilized in fluid groups.

Humboldt teachers provide many different levels of instruction and opportunities for diverse learners to be successful. Pull out and push in programs such as English Language Learners, Response to Intervention Special Education, Talented and Gifted, and Title I provide instruction that is designed to meet the needs of individuals in our sub-groups.

These programs provide support targeting skills needed to excel learning. Progress monitoring data is used to guide instruction and make decisions about modifications and accommodations for these small groups as well as whole group instruction. Finally, collaboration amongst all staff ensures that we are providing differentiated instructional strategies and methods to ensure high levels of student learning and achievement for all.

6. Professional Development:

Humboldt CSD has utilized the Authentic Intellectual Work (AIW) framework (<http://centerforaiw.com>) for the last four years at the elementary and middle school and six years at the high school for the basis of their weekly PD. Improvement in the quality of teaching enabling students to develop HOTS, demonstrate complex understanding of significant concepts, and engage in work that has meaning and value beyond school is the intent. Teachers, administrators, and coaches form professional learning communities that follow the AIW protocol to analyze tasks, student work and instruction and provide insights into enabling teachers to make improvements in their instructional practices. All teaching staff including Special Education, Title I and Specials participate on these AIW learning teams and provide differentiation ideas as the teams make suggestions for revisions.

Each one of the elementary teams participates in a minimum of 15 AIW scoring sessions and the AIW Fall and Mid Year Institutes, their personal instruction being scored at least once. One of our elementary goals is to improve instructional strategies that support the components of AIW. The elementary teachers are spending three Wednesdays with their learning team, looking at data and studying an instructional strategy based on the data and curricular needs pertinent to each grade level. (e.g. Daily 5, 6+1 Traits of Writing, etc.) Each team selected its own focus and is designing their own learning, with a focus on

evidence of how their PD has impacted at least one AIW Standard. Based on their professional development study each team set a couple of student goals, and they are collecting data to share with the school board at the end of the year.

Our prep and preschool teachers are working collaboratively and focusing on technology, Creative Curriculum learning opportunities, and developing skills with the GOLD assessment program.

Once a month, K-12 grade teachers meet with a specific content area curriculum team, led by one of their peers. This 6-year Curriculum Cycle focuses on all components of the Iowa Core and the national standards, strategies to implement the components of AIW, instructional strategies, and developing an understanding of conceptual learning.

Each staff member has a Professional Growth Binder that contains weekly reflections, copies of the Iowa Core, a section on Conceptual learning and a record of scoring opportunities, and their work that has been scored and revised.

7. School Leadership:

Taft Elementary has shifted from top-down decision making to teacher leaders making recommendations and aligning resources to enhance student achievement. Our district philosophy and mission is focused on teacher leadership teams working toward the ultimate goal of 'Learning and Success for ALL'. The Elementary Principal utilizes workplace factors like opportunity and flexibility, building a culture designed to support his staff in ongoing professional growth while developing leadership capacity.

Our elementary school improvement leadership structure includes teacher leaders on the Elementary Leadership Team, Authentic Intellectual Work team, Positive Behavior and Supports Team, and building representatives on the district Green Team, Technology Team, Teacher Quality and the School Improvement Advisory Committee. Each of these building representatives is responsible to bring the information from the elementary staff to the committee to make decisions aligned with increasing student achievement.

Leading reform through shared decision making Curriculum Teams meet monthly with K-12 staff and make building level decisions that positively impact student achievement. Some examples include the following: After aligning the Iowa Core with their materials the elementary SS leaders found the need to select materials to integrate more history. The elementary Science Team leaders determined that Health needed more focus and they are working with the PE teachers and building counselor to address this issue. The elementary leaders on the Reading/LA team are focusing on vertically aligning comprehension skills based on the Iowa Core. Our PE, Art, and Music Curriculum teams are aligning their standards around conceptual learning. We have several elementary teachers that lead these teams and each grade level has a representative on the team that ensures that decisions meet the needs of our students.

We have grade level representatives on the Report Card and Grading Committee that are conducting building meetings focused on cohesive grading practices and documenting student progress. At Taft one of our CGI coach was selected to present at the National Cognitive Guided Instruction conference this summer. Addressing our mission, vision and goal our elementary DLT representative are analyzing multiple data sets addressing proficiency, attendance, and long term effects on students served in Title 1. Our elementary Authentic Intellectual Work coaches guide their elementary teams in analyzing instruction, tasks and student work determining if students have a deep understanding through conceptual learning and HOTS.

A shared vision of improved student achievement through quality collaboration guided by teacher leaders is the norm at Taft Elementary.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: Iowa Assessments

Edition/Publication Year: 1st/2011 Publisher: Riverside

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov
SCHOOL SCORES					
Intermediate/proficient and above	88	88	85	86	84
High/advanced	36	39	27	30	37
Number of students tested	73	82	74	73	81
Percent of total students tested	100	100	96	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed			3		
Percent of students alternatively assessed			4		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Intermediate/proficient and above	78	77	76	75	87
High/advanced	28	41	17	29	36
Number of students tested	32	27	29	24	31
2. African American Students					
Intermediate/proficient and above					
High/advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Intermediate/proficient and above	82				
High/advanced	9				
Number of students tested	11				
4. Special Education Students					
Intermediate/proficient and above					
High/advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Intermediate/proficient and above					
High/advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Intermediate/proficient and above					
High/advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Iowa Assessments

Edition/Publication Year: 1st/2011 Publisher: Riverside

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov
SCHOOL SCORES					
Intermediate/proficient and above	89	87	75	88	90
high/advanced	25	29	20	28	28
Number of students tested	73	82	74	75	80
Percent of total students tested	100	100	96	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed			3		
Percent of students alternatively assessed			4		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Intermediate/proficient and above	81	78	59	88	90
high/advanced	9	26	21	28	23
Number of students tested	32	27	29	25	31
2. African American Students					
Intermediate/proficient and above					
high/advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Intermediate/proficient and above	91				
high/advanced	9				
Number of students tested	11				
4. Special Education Students					
Intermediate/proficient and above					
high/advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Intermediate/proficient and above					
high/advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Intermediate/proficient and above					
high/advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: Iowa Assessments

Edition/Publication Year: 1st/2011 Publisher: Riverside

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov
SCHOOL SCORES					
intermediate/proficient and above	90	90	90	89	89
high/advanced	41	35	40	40	20
Number of students tested	91	78	76	81	81
Percent of total students tested	99	96	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	3			
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	4			
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
intermediate/proficient and above	82	83	79	86	91
high/advanced	36	25	33	35	12
Number of students tested	28	36	24	29	34
2. African American Students					
intermediate/proficient and above					
high/advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
intermediate/proficient and above					
high/advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
intermediate/proficient and above		73			
high/advanced		9			
Number of students tested		11			
5. English Language Learner Students					
intermediate/proficient and above					
high/advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
intermediate/proficient and above					
high/advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Iowa Assessments

Edition/Publication Year: 1st/2011 Publisher: Riverside

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov
SCHOOL SCORES					
intermediate/proficient and above	84	89	83	92	86
high/advanced	20	30	25	44	25
Number of students tested	91	78	76	82	82
Percent of total students tested	99	96	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	3			
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	4			
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
intermediate/proficient and above	72	78	83	87	83
high/advanced	14	20	21	33	30
Number of students tested	28	36	24	30	47
2. African American Students					
intermediate/proficient and above					
high/advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
intermediate/proficient and above					
high/advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
intermediate/proficient and above		64			
high/advanced		0			
Number of students tested		11			
5. English Language Learner Students					
intermediate/proficient and above					
high/advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
intermediate/proficient and above					
high/advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					